



Dr. Covello's Project RiSE Testimony to the Philadelphia Board of Education
September 24, 2026

"I am Dr. Margery Covello, CEO of Lindley Academy Charter School, and a member of Project RiSE Working Group. I am here today to speak about the need for transparency and fairness in how the SDP authorizes charter schools.

Families deserve an authorizing process that is transparent, rigorous, and consistent. Schools should understand the standards they are held to and experience consistent application of the standards. Project RiSE launched because the current framework needs fundamental change. That was the right decision. But while a new framework is developed, schools continue to face high-stakes renewal decisions under the inherently flawed framework. Schools with similar results receive different outcomes, leaving communities without a clear explanation of why. The subjective nature of these important decisions erodes trust in the process at a time when Philadelphia families need stability in education more than anything.

At Lindley, we see firsthand why an authorizing framework must account for the full scope of how charter schools serve their communities. Our school is an Autistic Support Center, supporting scholars across 10 of the 13 disability classifications. We also support an exponentially higher number of scholars experiencing housing instability through McKinney-Vento than the district average, ensuring housing concerns do not disrupt education. These are important parts of what it means to serve Philadelphia's children, and the SDP accountability system needs to recognize this.

RiSE is an opportunity to get this right. School leaders, families, and the public must be able to see the proposed standards, the data behind them, and how the framework would affect their communities before any vote is taken.

I ask this Board to commit to a public timeline for RiSE and to share the proposed framework and its supporting data for public comment before adoption.

Lindley families need to understand what our data means and how it will impact their child's future education.

Families deserve accountability and a process they can trust. Thank you."